

THE GULL



Golden Gate Audubon Society

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AMERICAN RIVER DANGER

By July 15th the Bureau of Land Management needs to hear what you think about the American River National Recreation Area, and it is urgent.

In limbo for the past fifteen years, Auburn Dam is very much alive right now. In April big dam supporters announced plans to place the massive project on the ballot in Sacramento County. While it might seem unlikely that a billion dollar-plus project could be approved by voters, the drought combined with a desire for flood control could easily sway public opinion.

Auburn Dam would flood 48 miles of the North and Middle forks of the American River. At best, it would deliver about a tenth of the water that the much smaller Folsom reservoir provides right now. A dam could provide Sacramento with needed flood protection, but the fact of the matter is, the capital city can double its flood control without any dam whatsoever. An alternative to this outdated project, supported by the American River Coalition, is the creation of the American River National Recreation Area. Since the Bureau of Land

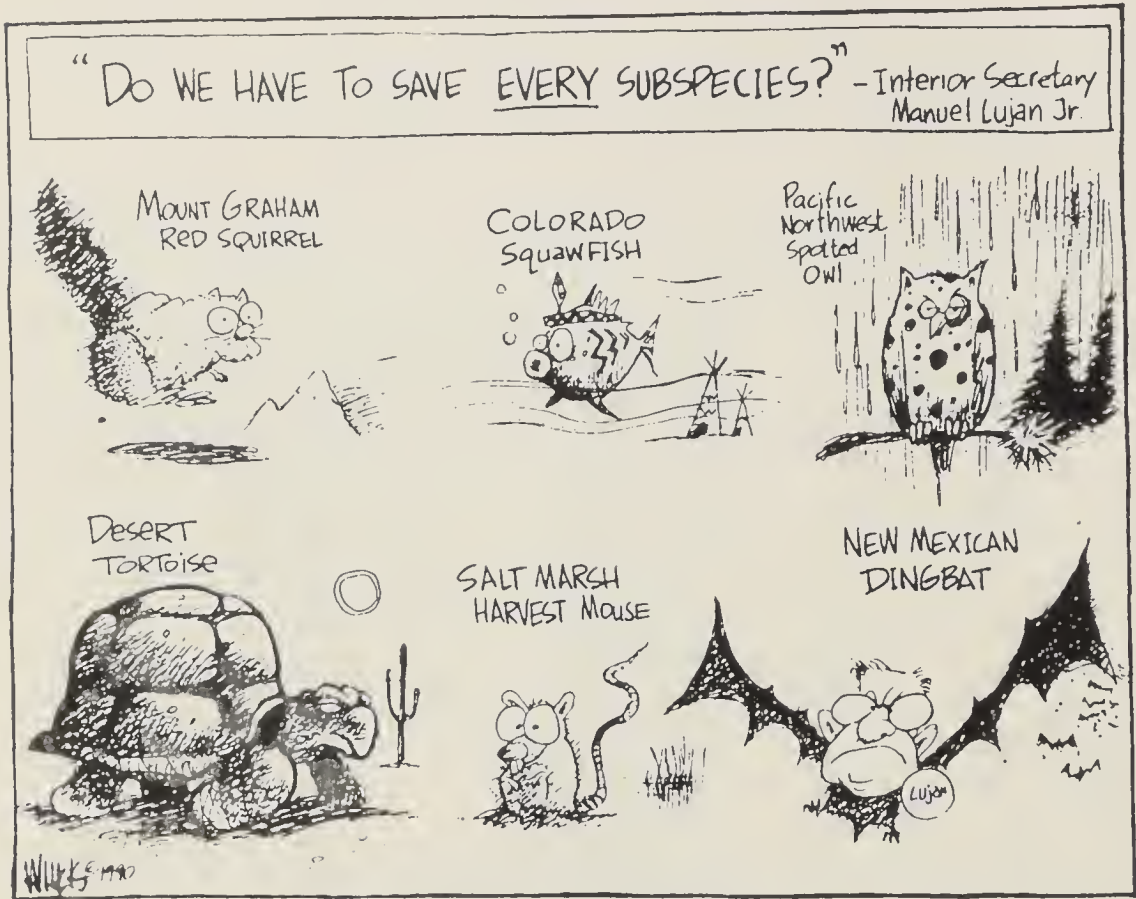
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DR. LUIS BAPTISTA TO LECTURE

The California Academy of Sciences, The Commonwealth Club and Golden Gate Audubon Society are sponsoring an evening lecture by Dr. Baptista entitled "Bird Navigation, Migration and Conservation" and sub-titled "Tropical Deforestation and its impact on North American Bird Populations".

It will be on Thursday, July 12 at the Commonwealth Club, 595 Market St., San Francisco, corner of 2nd and Market Sts. Lecture is from 5:15-6:30 p.m., cocktails at 4:45. Lecture fee is \$5 for members and \$8 for others. Phone 543-3353 to reserve tickets.

Dr. Baptista is chairman and curator of the California Academy of Sciences department of ornithology and mammalogy. He is an authority on bird migration and regional bird dialects. His work has taken him to many parts of North America, Central America, the Caribbean and New Guinea. He will address the phenomenon of bird migration with special attention to locating migrating bird populations based on their songs, and the issue of how tropical deforestation is hurting bird populations here.



SCOTT WILLIS in the SAN JOSE *MERCURY NEWS*, May 15, 1990

RIVER (continued)

Management has already established that the area is suitable for federal designation, the issue has now become intensely political. Public support is therefore desperately needed.

In the Sierra foothills, the rugged and scenic three forks of the American River attract hundreds of thousands of people each year. Just east of Sacramento, the upper American River offers unparalleled recreation in the wilderness close to this metropolitan area. The undeveloped canyons of the river also

provide invaluable habitat for fish and wildlife. These rivers are a spectacular natural resource, but they would be destroyed by the proposed Auburn Dam. Instead of drowning 48 miles of river with an unneeded reservoir, why not preserve the American River for the entire nation to enjoy?

Imagine almost 100 miles of scenic river and canyons, stretching from the remote Sierra Nevada to the growing metropolis of Sacramento. There are historic trails to hike, campgrounds to enjoy, and habitat to protect. Sections

of the river are already designated Wild Trout streams. For rafting enthusiasts, the North and Middle forks provide some of the best white water in the country. Designation as a National Recreation Area would increase and enhance those facilities and protect the natural resources of the area.

Write to the state director of BLM and give your reasons for supporting NRA designation. Points to include:

- uniqueness of the area
- it must include free-flowing waters of three forks
- it will not jeopardize flood control
- it will contain habitat, historical and cultural sites.
- it will preserve recreation areas
- ask to be added to the mailing list.

It is important that the Bureau know how many people are interested in preservation of the American River as it exists. Write to:

Edward I. Hastey, State Director BLM
2800 Cottage Way, Room E-2841
Sacramento, CA 95825

If you need more information call the American River Coalition office (916) 448-1045.

FIELD TRIPS CALENDAR

Sunday, July 8—Chimney Rock, Point Reyes. See June *GULL* for details.

Saturday–Sunday, July 21–22—Yosemite Alpine Ecology. Meet at 8:30 a.m. (both days) at junction of Hwy. 120 and Saddlebag Lake Rd., just below Tioga Lodge and approximately 2 miles east of Tioga pass.

On Saturday we plan to cross Saddlebag Lake by boat (small fee), hike over Lundy Pass and down Lundy Canyon toward Mono Lake—a vertical drop of over 3,000 feet. This was considered by David Gaines to be the most gorgeous wildflower walk in the Sierra, passing through many habitats on a trail that very few people ever see. The

wildflower display will depend somewhat on the water situation at that time.

We will carpool on Saturday, with some cars left at the end of the trail near Lundy Lake (volunteers for this please call before trip), so that the hike is essentially downhill. (We only climb about 500 to 600 feet to the top of Lundy Pass.) All participants should be in good physical shape and used to hiking—we will hike 5 to 6 miles, mostly downhill, and the trail can be steep and somewhat difficult at times.

On Sunday we will go to a different location, yet to be selected, and will be finished by 2 to 3 p.m. to allow for return to the Bay Area at a reasonable hour.

Each day you should bring lunch, ample liquids, hat, water repellent jacket, mosquito repellent, and good walking shoes (or boots) with treaded soles—no smooth soles please. The emphasis both days will be on general High Sierra ecology, not just birds.

Forest Service campgrounds are located off Hwy. 120 between Tioga Pass and Lee Vining, and within Yosemite—Tuolumne Meadows Campground is nearby (some reservations through Ticketron). Motels in Lee Vining include Best Western Lakeview Motel (619/647-6543), Gateway Motel (619/647-6467), and Murphey's Motel (619/647-6316). Leader: George Peyton (415/444-3131—weekdays). \$(✓)

Trips marked with \$ go to parks and other sites that require an entrance fee.

Carpooling arrangements will be attempted for trips marked (✓).

Problems: If you need a ride or can take a passenger, or if you need information and have difficulty reaching a field trip leader, call Russ Wilson, Field Trips Committee Chmn. (524-2399).

—FIELD TRIPS COMMITTEE

DEADLINE REMINDER

Copy for *The GULL* for September is due July 15th.

OBSERVATIONS

Through May 20, 1990

A pelagic trip is never a sure thing—if there's a carnival side-show for bird watchers, if there is a Las Vegas of the sea, this has got to be it. And it's not just a matter of "you pays your money and you takes your chances"—there are financial aspects to the situation, of course, particularly if you have flown out from Philadelphia for the occasion, but twitchers give a whole new slant to the economics of birdwatching which is better not broached here. No, there are other more esoteric considerations—there's the matter of you and your breakfast and lunch and whether you will remain united for the duration or whether you, helplessly and selflessly, will contribute them for chum to attract birds that you will be too miserable to see; there's the very serious matter of broken bones—on a pitching, rolling boat, it's a wonder that anyone survives with limbs intact and there are grisly tales to prove that not everyone does; there's the problem of stepping inside to clean the salt-spray off your binoculars so you can see, just as the Cook's Petrel sweeps past the front of the boat and disappears; there's the worry that the boat will turn back before you've seen anything, quickly replaced by the terror that you're never going to feel solid land beneath your feet again. No one ever said it wasn't an adventure. It's spring in California and pelagic trips represent one of the last great frontiers of birdwatching. What spring brings that fall doesn't is *Pterodroma* Petrels, the "gadflies", South Pacific breeders that range far when not breeding, bouyant flyers normally found far from land. The last couple of years, observers on research vessels regularly have been seeing these

birds—Murphy's, Solanders, Cook's, Mottled Petrels—off the California coast from mid-April to mid-June, but until now there hasn't been any way for the basic, enthusiastic birder without connections in high places to get out far enough to have much hope of seeing these species—many commercial boats are not licensed to go out that distance and many of those that are are unsuitable for groups. Added to which is the fact that spring seas are not gentle seas.

This year, a group of three people independently organized long (17 hours) trips on three successive days in mid May—the demand was overwhelming and the trips were filled practically before they were announced. That was in January—when May finally rolled around the wind had been blowing pretty consistently and pretty hard for nearly a month-and-a-half and the forecasts were glum—undaunted the boat ventured forth from Sausalito at 4 a.m. on day one and plowed through swells for an hour or more until it became obvious that things were not going to improve, that were they able to get out further, it was too rough to see anything, and most of the time passengers were of a hue better suited to astroturf. By day two the prospect of rain had arisen, the wind had shifted to the south and the sea had flattened out. The boat made it out 90 miles and the lucky voyagers saw three **Murphy's Petrels**, one **Cook's Petrel**, two **Leach's Storm Petrels**, two **Xantus' Murrelets** and fifteen **Horned Puffins** (SFB, ISA). Day three was a repeat of day one save the group didn't make it as far as Point Bonita. A mere whimper compared to January's bravado and all in all a lesson in the changeability of the weather and the unpredictability of birds—but a tantalizing

glimpse of what might be seen next year.

Other than that it's been a mighty slow month, saved by the continuing novelty of returning and nesting migrants. One interesting tidbit was the sighting of **Mottled Petrel**, another *Pterodroma*, from the end the Overlook Drive in Bolinas on April 25 (fide KH)—proof that with enough time and patience maybe it isn't necessary to worry about boats and heavy seas and 90 miles off-shore.

White-faced Ibis, slightly off course, showed up in a couple of places around the Bay—one in Golden Gate Park on the 3rd (MMa), one in Vallejo on the 5th (MBG) and two at Coyote Hills on the 17th (NK).

The **Garganey** was last seen at the Bolinas Sewer Ponds on April 30 (mob). The Great Duck List, long promised, but only now forthcoming, is a bit of a revelation—even allowing for some duplication, there are surprisingly large numbers of these guys here in the course of the winter even considering that as a rule ducks are easier to see than warblers, for example, and therefore more likely to turn up a couple of new individuals lending credence to the belief more eyes mean more unusual birds.

EURASIAN WIGEON

1	10/18-12/22	Horseshoe Pond, Pt. Reyes	BDP, RMS, JEP
1-4	10/13-1/9	Charleston Slough	PJM, BHi, ALE
1	11/11-4/3	Bolinas Lagoon	DN,JM,mob
1	11/20-12/4	Lake Solano	MBG
1-3	12/1-12/22	Sunnyvale Sewer Ponds	PJM
1	12/5-12/10	Los Gatos Creek Park	MFg
1	12/17	Oakland Airport	BU
2	12/26	Graylodge	JEP, DBP
2	12/30	San Rafael	AD,LJP
2	1/11	Palo Alto Baylands	PJM
1-2	1/12-3/20	Coyote Hills	IBI, JM, DCo
1	1/17	Pescadero Marsh	GeP

1	1/21	Corte Madera	KGH, JM
1-2	1/22-3/4	Arrowhead Marsh	DHa, ABH, BMa
1	1/28	Limantour	AD, RS
2	2/11	San Carlos	RSTh
1	2/17	Grizzly Island	LC
1	2/18	Doolittle Pond	Tckl
1	2/18	Clifton Court Forebay	RJR
1	3/1	Hayward Shoreline	FGB
1	4/1	Las Gallinas Sewer Ponds	KSe

TUFTED DUCK

1	12/30	Mallard Reservoir, Concord	RJR
1	12/30	Bolinas Sewer Ponds	PP
			<i>fide</i> HG
1	1/1	Lake Hennesey	JEP, BDP
1	1/9-4/26	Sutro Baths, Golden Gate Park, Lake Merced	KM, mob
1	1/10	Rodeo Lagoon	CLF
1	1/15	San Pablo Reservoir	DES
1	1/22	Arrowhead Marsh	DaHa,DeHa
1	3/6	Richardson's Bay	DaWh
1	4/4	Warm Springs, Alameda City	LRF

HARLEQUIN DUCK

1	4/9/89-5/9/89	Bolinas Lagoon	JM, KH, mob
1	11/18-1/18	Coyote Point Museum	PLN, AWi, mob
1	12/16-2/21	Fish Docks, Drakes Bay	MFg, MFe, DGo
3-6	1/21	Sea Ranch	BiL
1	2/02-4/9	Cannery Row, Monterey	CTr,RS

OLDSQUAW

1-2	11/20-5/12	Princeton Harbor	PJM, JMo, mob
1	12/16	Abbott's Lagoon	<i>fide</i> DW m
2-4	12/22-4/22	Fish Docks, Pt. Reyes	JEP, JM, DWm, RS
1-5	1/1-2/24	Moss Landing Harbor	BS, <i>fide</i> PJM, CKf
1	2/3-4/24	China Camp State Park	JAnd, KLH, MMck
1	2/17-2/19	Monterey Harbor	MFe, <i>fide</i> KGH
1	2/20-2/23	Johnson's Oyster Farm	FGB, EDG
1	2/25-2/27	San Gregorio Beach	JBot, JMR
2	4/28	San Rafael	SMar
1	4/28	Pt. Reyes Lighthouse	ISa

BARROW'S GOLDENEYE

4-30	11/6-2/27	Lake Merritt, Laney College Estuary	RSc, mob
1	11/12-2/10	Bolinas Lagoon	JM, mob
1	4/7-4/29	Bolinas Lagoon	DSj, RS <i>fide</i> KH, SFB, ISa
1-6	11/18-2/18	Clifton Court Forebay	RJR, KGH
1-3	12/3-1/19	Shoreline Lake, Moutainview	PJM, MFg
1	1/13-2/8	Sutro Baths	NFe, DSg, JM, mob
2-3	1/20	Foster City Lagoon	MFg
8	1/21	Bolinas Sewer Ponds	JCl
1	1/21	Lake Solano	JH

At the beginning of May there was a veritable wave of Solitary Sandpipers—two at Bolinas Sewer Ponds on the 1st and 2nd (KH, MBu); individuals at the Spaletta Stock Ponds on the 2nd (MLR) and on the 10th (RS); Five Brooks Pond from the 2nd to the 4th (MLR, MBG), MacKerricher State Park on the 5th (DT), and Lake Lucerne on the San Mateo Coast on the 6th (RSth).

Phalaropes were more ubiquitous than usual. Red-necked were seen at the Spaletta Stock Ponds, (MLR); Lake Merced (SMo, JSC, KSW), Limantour (CFo), and Bolinas Sewer Ponds (MFg). Red Phalaropes, unusual inside the Bay, were found at the Hayward Shoreline (RJR, AWi), Redwood Shores, (RSth); Foster City (AGa, DWm); and Pescadero Marsh (DRe). A very early Elegant Tern was at Charleston Slough on the 4th (PJM).

Mines Road, San Antonio Junction and Del Puerto Canyon had the usual complement of spring trips and the corresponding assemblage of good finds: Greater Roadrunner on April 28th and 29th (DSi, AME); Costa's Hummingbird through the 29th (JMR, AME); Calliope Hummingbird on the 28th (LJP, MLR); up to six Lewis's Woodpeckers (JMR, JM), Hammond's Flycatcher on the 28th (DSg, ASH); Yellow-breasted Chat through the 28th,

and up to four Lawrence's Goldfinches (JEa, JM). Hammond's Flycatchers were present on Mt. Diablo from April 29th to May 2nd (SMo, THK, JM).

The Dusky-capped Flycatcher was still being seen at Pine Lake Park on the 20th, and a Scissor-tailed Flycatcher put in a brief appearance at Crespi Pond in Pacific Grove on the 8th (RER).

The warbler season is not yet upon us. There were more unusual individuals around for most of the winter than there were this past month—three Nashville Warblers on Mt. Diablo from the 29th to the 2nd (JM, THK) and a Palm Warbler at Ft. Funston on the 6th (SMo). Mt. Diablo also produced Black-chinned Sparrows on the 2nd and 6th (THK, RSc); and Sage Sparrows on the 2nd (THK). Grasshopper Sparrows were singing on Cloverdale Road in San Mateo County (PJM) and in Napa (MBG). Red Crossbills, scarce this past winter, were seen and heard in San Francisco at Baker Beach (BHo), Golden Gate Park (GHu) and Lincoln Park (ASH) on the 16th and 17th.

OBSERVERS:

Jan Anderson, Stephen F. Bailey, Nora Bairn, Anthony Battiste, Florence G. Bennett, Ira Bletz, Jonathon Botello, Mark Butler, Josiah Clark, Luke Cole, Nancy Conzett, T. Cockle, J. Scott Cox, J. Michael Danzenbaker, Martha Davis, Ann Dewart, Joe Eaton, Art Edwards (ALE), Alan Eisner (AME), Carter Faust, Leora J. Fenney, Gary Feldman, Mike Feighner (MFg), Marc Fenner (MFe), Craig Forsythe, Alexander Gaguine, D. Goodward, Ed Greaves, Helen Green, Marguerite B. Gross, D. Hamilton, David Hamilton, Denise Hamilton, Kem Hainebach (KLH), Keith Hansen (KH), Kevin Hintsä (KGH), Bob Hirt, Bob Hogan, Alan S. Hopkins, Joel Hornstein, George Hugenberg, Joan Humphrey, Clay Kempf, Norman Kidder, Ted Koundkjian, Earl Lebow, Bill Lenarz,

Bob Mandell, Many Observers (mob), Steve Margolin, Marty Maricle, Mary McKennon, Kevin Metcalf, Peter Metropulos, Joe Morlan, Scott Morrical, Dan Nelson, Paul Noble, George Page, Benjamin D. Parmeter, John E. Parmeter, M. Patten, Judy Penn, Lina Jane Prairie, Peter Pyle, Dorothy Reinhart, Jean M. Richmond, Robert J. Richmond, Robin E. Roberson, Mary Louise Rosegay, Barry Sauppe, Rusty Scalf, Donald E. Schmoldt, Kevin Sea, Dianne Sierra (DSi), Dan Singer (DSg), Rich Stallcup (RS), Robert M. Stewart (RMS), Emilie Strauss, Kirk Swenson, Ronald S. Thorn, Dorothy Tobkin, Cynthia Trollman, Bob Ulvang, Darryl Whitworth (DaWh), David Wimpfheimer (DWm), Anna Wilcox, Katherine S. Wilson.

The May report is somewhat truncated because I'm off to Scotland and the Orkneys and Shetlands for a couple of weeks—I expect to return with tales of Skuas and Jaegers, Gannets and Guillemots and in turn be regaled with stories of all that I missed. Oh well.

—ANN DEWART

CONSERVATION NOTES

Bringing You Up to Date

As a result of our victory in Federal Court, the Port of Oakland was ordered to do an EIS/EIR on its proposed airport wetland fill. Instead, the Port launched a Master Plan process that is now reaching final stages. The Port of Oakland wants to expand the Airport, and has presented about eight alternatives. Most involve either filling the Bay or filling the same seasonal wetlands over which we took them to court.

We believe, because of the regional alternatives available, that no expansion is necessary and the proper alternative is “no project”. The fight is in an early stage and we will need all your support.

If you are interested in helping, please call the Conservation Committee Chairman, Arthur Feinstein (282-5937).

We are presently in Appellate Court over the original Port of Oakland suit, seeking lawyer's fees and also removal of 40 acres of wetland fill.

We were also forced to sue the Army Corps of Engineers over the filling of seasonal wetlands on the Port's Distribution Center. This is a more than 100 acre project located next to Arrowhead Marsh East Bay Regional Park. The suit disputes a Corps statement that the area contains no wetlands; we are asserting that the area is almost all wetlands. The Judge in this case ruled against the Corps, ordering them to re-do their wetland determination. He ordered in our favor on attorney's fees. We await the Corps' new determination; an unfavorable action by the Corps will bring us back to court again.

We are continuing to negotiate over the Harbor Bay Isle Ferry. We fear that the ferry may destroy the eelgrass beds in that area, and in addition to the herring spawning ground, the California Least Tern will be hurt. The City of Alameda approved the ferry with no real environmental study. We sued, they capitulated, rescinded their approval and undertook a more extensive study. We believe the new study to be inadequate and are in negotiation with the City. Further litigation may be necessary.

We have a very active role in both Alameda and Contra Costa Counties in support of open space and wildlife habitat. Working with the Sierra Club and the Greenbelt Alliance, we sent out action alerts urging you to write to the county boards of supervisors. This campaign led to the passage of Supervisor Mary King's very good General Plan amendment for open space. Alameda County is being sued, but we anticipate

that the amendment will survive this assault without serious weakening.

In Contra Costa we are aiding Mt. Diablo Audubon, Greenbelt Alliance and the Sierra Club in their attempt to pass an open space initiative. We have mailed petitions to our members in the county; if you live in Contra Costa please help by getting petitions signed.

We are helping Greenbelt Alliance defend against a suit brought by the Building Industry Association, which claims the initiative petition drive is in violation of state law. We believe this is simply an attempt to block the initiative process. We expect to be successful in this suit and to have the expenses reimbursed.

The two development proposals in Contra Costa at issue are Carriage Hills near Richmond and Gateway in Orinda. The Carriage Hills project would destroy habitat of the endangered Aleutian Canada Goose, and to defend it we have written letters and testified at hearings over the project. Gateway threatens the integrity of several East Bay Regional Park District lands. I have recently visited Huckleberry Park and I am impressed how important it is to preserve this area for open space and wildlife habitat. Several GGAS members are working very hard to preserve the Gateway area. The proposed solution is to bring the land into the EBRPD.

Your San Francisco Conservation Committee has been very active in promoting wetlands in Mission Bay and at Candlestick Park. We are also doing a year-long, intensive bird census of the Presidio to insure that any decisions regarding the future of the Presidio take into account wildlife and habitat. We are also very active in working to preserve habitat in Golden Gate Park and Lake Merced.

For several years I have been representing GGAS and working on the San Francisco Estuary Project. I am

presently a member of the Management Conference Committee of the project. Created by The Clean Water Act and sponsored by EPA, this project is to "restore and maintain the chemical, physical and biological integrity of the San Francisco Estuary. (more?)

We do lots more, and will report again soon. But we do need help. Always. Please call either Barbara Rivenes at the office (843-2222) or me at home (282-5937).

ARTHUR FEINSTEIN

Decision for the Desert The California Desert Protection Act

Letters in support of the Act are of great importance at this time. Twenty-three California representatives have joined as sponsors; if yours has, a warm letter of thanks is appropriate; if not a letter requesting sponsorship should be written. The following from GGAS districts are now sponsors: Nancy Pelosi, Barbara Boxer, George Miller, Ronald Dellums, Peter Stark. Senator Alan Cranston is a sponsor and Senator Pete Wilson is not. Please write.

NAS PRESIDENT BERLE:

Often the success of an issue depends upon expressions of support from chapters and individuals around the country. President Peter A. A. Berle wrote recently urging endorsement of efforts to pass the California Desert Protection Act. "Unfortunately under present management (Bureau of Land

GOOD SAM MEMBERS

If you are a member of the Good Sam Club and would like to help protect the California Desert, please call Nobby Riedy of the Wilderness Society at (415) 541-9144.

Management, US Dept. of Interior) too many of these desert areas are threatened by unrestrained off-road vehicle activity or mining. Only from the firm statutory protection of the Wilderness Act or a National Park designation will permit these areas to be passed on intact to future generations for enjoyment of wildlife, solitude and open space.”

BACK YARD BIRDER

Bird songs abound in springtime. New arrivals, as well as residents, set up a chorus I can't ignore. For unknown reasons, mockingbirds have not settled in my yard, preferring the neighbor's below us. Perhaps, then, it's a new bird on the block who has decided to belt out his best repertoire in my yard, hoping to attract a mate. One particularly vocal afternoon I took notes on his extraordinarily varied mimicry. Interspersed with his own main theme were 12 different birds' songs plus a croaking frog, a cat's meow, a dog's bark and other clicks. I was ready to proclaim him grand champion of mockers until I read that a mockingbird in Boston's arboretum was credited with 39 bird songs, 50 bird *calls* plus 5 or more non-nature sounds!

Scientists named the Northern Mockingbird *Mimus polyglottos*, meaning many-tongued mimic. They used to be thought of as a bird of temperate climes, but in the past 25 years their range has extended as far north as Newfoundland. This slim, gray, robin-sized bird seems to thrive in proximity to man. Mockingbirds and other members of the mimic thrush family (catbirds and thrashers) are birds of brushy tangles—either shrubby forest understory, desert scrub or your yard's shrubs. They love berries and fruit and enjoy foraging on the ground for insects and subterranean morsels. They have long tails which they used expressively. When perched,

mockers hold their tails at an upward angle. Their flight appears inefficient, butterfly-like—in fact, they prefer running along the ground on their long legs.

All members of the *mimidae* family have loud, bubbly songs, punctuated with clucks and snaps, but the mockingbird's is the most varied. When trying to attract a mate, the male sings his inventive songs loudly—often into the night. These imitative songs are so accurate that electronic analysis cannot detect the difference from the original. Still, he does not fool other birds, possibly because he changes the songs so rapidly. There is no easy explanation for a mocker's mimicry. It certainly attracts the attention of a prospective mate. His concert is often accompanied by a leap from his perch as he displays handsome white wing patches. The most popular theory for such intricate mimicry is that it is a form of self-reinforcement—i.e. mockers sing just for the fun of it!

Mockingbirds are intensely territorial. In spring they fiercely defend their breeding grounds and nests against other birds and enemies such as snakes, cats, squirrels and humans. They literally dive-bomb intruders. After attracting a female, the birds build nests hidden by dense vegetation in shrubs and trees. The female incubates the 4–5 eggs for two weeks and both parents feed the young until they fledge in 10–12 days. Often they will raise a second brood.

Along with chickadees, mockingbirds hold a non-breeding territory during winter. After molting in August–September (when they are obviously very quiet), a male, a female or a mated pair will use calls, songs and displays to stake out an area which will be a good food source during the winter. Their most common competitors are

jays, starlings and robins. However, occasionally a band of mockingbirds with no territory of their own will raid their 'cousins.' In a rare show of solidarity, neighboring mockers will band together to drive out these brazen intruders. Once they are entrenched in their winter areas, the birds will remain fairly quiet until early spring. Then the wonderful songsters begin anew. It would be a dull spring indeed without their beautiful and spirited choruses.

—MEG PAULETICH

O'PINIONS

(from *WESTERN Tanager* for April, LA Audubon Society)

You know, when I first came to this part of the world, virtually all the birds were new to me, and there was so much to learn. What kind of bird is it? What age, what sex? What is it doing, where is it going, will it be here next season? As a bird-watcher, I feel it is my bounden duty to learn as much as I can about my local species: their identification, in all plumages and habits of all seasons. For I am certainly their appointed steward—if not I, who?—and only the steward who knows his charges will be the proper arbiter of their rights. But beyond that responsibility, the pleasure of a hobby is in acquiring experience in its object. Like the stamp collector who knows his watermarks, the baseball fan who can recite batting averages, the gardener who knows how to compost, how to prune, the birder should strive to master birdlore. The discovery of each new bird should be as full of rich potential as the uncovering of a buried treasure—an array of unknown jewels and hieroglyphed doubloons to be sorted through lovingly and in amaze.

I am afraid that many of the vast number of new birders flooding into the field, while admirably inspired by an awakening awareness of nature, have

no such goal to their yearnings but have been drawn in by the competitiveness of listing. These are the people who, a month into their new hobby, are decked out in thousands of dollars worth of optics and accessories: by their first spring they have already birded a swath through Arizona and Texas and they are now booked onto a birding tour of Peru. Unable to distinguish a Peewee from a Phoebe, they are off to have a dozen or so sibling species of tyrants and Elaenias pointed out to them by a knowledgeable leader, and at the end of the day they cannot recall without a reminder which species it was, anyway, that they saw in the clearing that morning.

It is a shame, for these people have been misled by the same red herring of aggressive consumerism that, ironically, we are so aware of in other situations: to get more than the other guy, it is only necessary to spend more... and the goal, of course, is to get more than the other guy. The question is, what exactly, are you getting?

Pleasure, obviously, and who can challenge another's idea of pleasure? That there is a joy of listing I cannot deny. But in this world of growing populations and shrinking resources, this pleasure is an attitude of life we can no longer afford to condone, much less abet, even in the most upright of contexts.

This is the difference between the gourmet and the glutton, and it is all the difference in the world.

—ERNEST S. THOMPSON

Your Conservation Committee urgently needs the help of someone (more than one?) interested in writing on conservation issues for *The GULL*. If you can help please call 843-2222 and leave your name and phone number.

FALL BIRDING CLASSES
IN SAN FRANCISCO

Evening bird classes taught by **Joe Morlan** will be starting Sept. 4, 5 and 6. All classes meet 7-9:30 p.m. in room 222, Marina Middle School, 3500 Fillmore at Bay St. Free parking is in the school lot off Bay St. on the east side of the building.

The instructor is co-author of *Birds of Northern California* and compiler of the recorded "Rare Bird Alert" sponsored by Golden Gate Audubon Society. Slides illustrate all lectures and the text for all classes is *A Field Guide to Western Birds (third edition)* by Roger Tory Peterson.

Field Ornithology I meets on Tuesdays. It is an introduction to birds and birding, combining basic field skills with the study of bird ecology, biology and behavior. Part A starts Sept. 4 and ends Oct. 23. Part B starts Oct. 30 and ends Dec. 11.

Field Ornithology II meets on Wednesdays. It is a continuing in-depth study of identification and status of North American land birds, including woodpeckers, flycatchers, pipits, swallows, and corvids. Part A starts Sept. 5 and ends Oct. 24. Part B starts Oct. 31 and ends Dec. 19.

Field Ornithology III meets on Thursdays. It is a continuing study of water birds including cormorants, alcids, waterfowl and seabirds. Part A starts Sept. 6 and ends Oct. 25. Part B starts Oct. 31 and ends Dec. 20.

These classes are endorsed by GGAS. Optional field trips on weekends may be arranged by the instructor. Please bring binoculars and field guides to class, if you have them.

Fees are \$50 for Part A (eight-week) courses and \$45 for part B (seven week) courses. Students do not need to take part A to enroll in Part B classes. Pre-registration is recommended. For

information call the San Francisco Community College, Community Services Office at 561-1840.

FIELD TRIP TO BRIONES

Anna Wilcox reports that the May 9, 1990 trip to Briones Park had 19 participants on an overcast, cool, windy day. They saw or heard forty species. Those only heard are shown in brackets, and those with an asterisk indicate other individuals also heard.

Turkey Vulture	7
Cooper's Hawk	2
Red-tailed Hawk	4
Mourning Dove	3
Anna's Hummingbird	2
Nuttal's Woodpecker	5
(Northern Flicker)	1
Western Wood Peewee*	4
Pacific Slope Flycatcher*	1
Black Phoebe	1
Ash-throated Flycatcher	3
Violet-green Swallow	3
Stellar's Jay	2
Scrub Jay	4
Chestnut-backed Chickadee	3
Plain Titmouse	3
Bushtit	3
(Bewick's Wren)	2
(Blue-gray Gnatcatcher)	2
Western Bluebird	2
Swainson's Thrush*	5
American Robin	4
(Wrentit)	2
(Solitary Vireo)	1
(Hutton's Vireo)	1
Warbling Vireo*	6
Orange-crowned Warbler*	7
(Yellow Warbler)	1
Hermit Thrush	1
Black-headed Grosbeak*	5
Lazuli Bunting*	7
Rufous-sided Towhee*	2
California Towhee	2
Chipping Sparrow	2
Song Sparrow*	1
Dark-eyed Junco	3
Red-winged Blackbird	17
Purple Finch*	3
Lesser Goldfinch	7
American Goldfinch (1)	5

(1) nesting

POINT REYES SEMINARS

Once again we have in hand the announcement of the summer schedule of field seminars offered by the Point Reyes National Seashore Association. (Address them at Point Reyes, CA 94956 or call 663-1200) between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday-Friday).

Of special interest to seniors might be the Elderhostel stay August 19-25, for which write Elderhostel at 100 Boylston, Boston, MA 02116 or call the number above.

An August program of special interest is on the 4th (fee \$28) on "The Amazing Bats of Point Reyes".

On the 8th of August at the peak of the shorebird migration Jules Evans offers "Windbirds" when he'll lead a search of for sandpipers, whimbrels, curlews, plovers and phalaropes. The fee is \$28.

Rich Stallcup offers a Sept. 15th day of "The Pageant of Migration" around the peninsula. Again the fee is \$28.

MONTEREY BAY PELAGIC TRIP

The GGAS will sponsor a boat trip on Sunday, September 23 to view seabirds and marine mammals. We plan a 7:30 a.m. departure from Monterey Harbor. Past trips have produced sightings of albatross, shearwaters, jaegers, alcids, dolphin, whales and other species not usually seen from land.

Reservations may be made by sending \$26 per person to Golden Gate Audubon Society, 1250 Addison Street # 107B, Berkeley, California 94702. Make checks payable to Golden Gate Audubon Society and enclose a self addressed stamped envelope. Details on when and where to meet will be mailed with confirmation notices. For more information call GGAS office at 843-2222.

LEAST TERNS GET HELP

Oakland Port & Scavengers

Every spring there is an effort to remove vegetation from the Oakland Airport Least Tern nesting site to maintain the integrity of the tern's habitat. Dense growth of invasive pampas grass and ice plant are always encroaching on the areas where the terns lay their small eggs on the ground. This year there were no State funds to provide for the necessary work. The Port of Oakland donated \$3300 to hire a crew from the East Bay Conservation Corps to remove vegetation for a one week period. **No agency required that the Port provide this assistance.** The act of cooperation to benefit the Least Tern must be acknowledged and appreciated. GGAS continues to do legal battle with the Port of Oakland over wetland issues, but is is very gratifying to receive support from this large and influential part of our community for our struggle to protect the endangered Least Tern in Oakland. Like no other Oakland entity, the Port is in a position to help preserve species which are threatened in the East Bay. We hope the recent positive action develops into a trend of cooperation regarding wildlife and habitat.

In addition, the Oakland Scavenger Company allowed twelve loads of pampas grass from a pickup truck to be dumped without charge. They seemed anxious to participate; Mr. Beale of the Scavengers said they support the effort 1000%. A big thank you is extended to the Port of Oakland, the Oakland Scavenger Company and the East Bay Conservation Corps.

—LEORA FEENEY
for GGAS

(The above was addressed to the editor of the Oakland Tribune.)

NEWS FROM THE RANCH

Season's End

It's that time again, when the ACR public season comes to an end. You have only until July 15 to pay that last visit to the Ranch. With the delayed breeding season you should see the egrets as they approach fledging. You may even be lucky enough to see one take its first miraculous flight. Miraculous because only a miracle seems to keep them from crashing. The trails will be dry, but beautiful. Try matching a low tide to a hike on the Griffin Loop Trail. Let your eyes and mind trace the ribbons of tidewater which extend across the exposed mud flats. It's a sight you won't soon forget.

Thanks for the Help

With the season's end we at ACR are grateful for our friends who made the 1990 public season successful. Many of our BAP docents led public walks and provided the only public access at our beautiful Bouverie Preserve. Ken Browning, our weekend coordinator at the Bolinas Lagoon Preserve, provided the leadership for our weekend hosts, presented ACR to the public, provided emergency help when needed, and until mid April had the unpleasant task of telling disappointed hikers much of our trail system was closed because the Golden Eagle was impacting the heronry for a second year. Edris Cole once again greeted us in the bookstore and guided us to just the right books, toys and gifts. The Ranch Guides, those special folks who give their weekends to teach us about life at the heronry, in the ponds and on the lagoon, deserve a special thanks. Our volunteer hosts from each of the sponsoring Audubon chapters lent their expertise to the Ranch experience too. Their warm greetings welcomed guests from many

parts of the world. Of course our visitors, so many of whom were generous enough to make contributions to the ACR effort, others of whom left with memories of ACR, shared them with friends, and extended the joy and wonder of the Ranch to so many others are included in our family of giving people too. Thanks so much to all of you who gave so much to make ACR's public year a successful one.

—DAN MURPHY

SOCIAL NOTE

In our mail was an announcement that Joelle Buffa and Clyde Morris were married in June. He is the former Cookie Chairman of San Francisco membership meetings and she is the chapter Program Chairman. Our warmest good wishes to them.

Very nineties people, their honeymoon is bikethon east from Anacortes, Washington to Bar Harbor, Maine, to benefit a tropical rainforest purchase program. Clyde and Joelle both work for resource agencies, and are committed environmentalists as you can see. Those who know them and want to contribute to this cause in their honor can call the GGAS office for further information.

RESTORING THE EARTH

Put your concerns into action. **Restoring the Earth**, in cooperation with the East Bay Regional Park District, has begun an ongoing ecological restoration effort—**Project Restore**. This action effort needs your help. Fieldwork is every other Saturday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The next one will be on July 14th. For information please call 843-2645.

FROM *The GULL*:

November 1947, Vol. 29, No. 11.

Problems of a City Refuge, by Paul F. Covel, *Ranger-Naturalist*

When asked to contribute something on the Lake Merritt Waterfowl Refuge the writer first planned to give such facts and events as population figures, dates of outstanding observations and other records. Then it occurred to him that much of this data may be found in back numbers of *The GULL* or recorded elsewhere, and that it might be interesting reading if he were to describe some of the problems encountered in operating a waterfowl refuge in a city park.

Audubon members and other confirmed bird students who occasionally visit the Refuge to study wild birds are not always aware of the many other types of people who visit the place for other motives. The average visitor comes merely to see and to feed, or bring children to give them cheap, safe and healthful recreation. Pigeons, tame Mallards, or even English Sparrows and Brewer's Blackbirds serve this purpose almost as well as the more aristocratic Pintails and widgeons. If a lecturer is present to point out the many species and plumages in the mass of fowl the visitor is surprised or even thrilled. But in spring, when all these wild species take wing in spite of protection and abundant food, appreciation of the faithful resident birds increases immeasurably.

The regal Mute swans, in spite of their bitter feuds and family failures, have long been one of the outstanding attractions of the Lake. A naturalist or a city official who didn't recognize their educational and entertainment value would indeed be indifferent to public opinion. They must be granted a permanent place in the colony, in spite of their shady past record, which includes

even murders of their own kind, of hapless Whistling Swan cripples introduced by man, and numerous "escapes" to distant portions of the East Bay. Actual nesting records of our Mute Swans reveal interesting facts, such as the 40 to 42 days of incubation required and the frequent relief by the male in incubation duty.

Predator control in and around the Refuge is essential for the protection of the young Mallards. Suppression of rats was well in hand this past season, but it soon became evident that certain birds of predatory instincts might take most of the duckling hatch. These confirmed duckling eaters were the lingering Glaucous-winged Gulls and the Black-crowned Night Herons from the Duck Island colony. Rather than seek permits and use firearms to remove these predators the writer endeavored to round up all the duckling broods soon after hatching. This meant use of a rowboat to herd them ashore and help from the gardeners to drive them into pens. As Mallards were hatching almost daily from April through July all around the Lake this roundup required much time, not to mention care of the broods thus penned up. In the pens many were afflicted with a strange malady that not even veterinary scientists could diagnose. Next year new rat-bird-burglar proof pens with running water and elevated floors will be tried out as duckling nurseries.

While functioning as nurse-maid and protector for the Mallards, in addition to serving the public in other capacities, it is disconcerting to receive insistent summons from irate citizens who have seen gulls gobble up ducklings or believe unhappy duck triangles should be broken up. At such times it is generally difficult to explain the balance of nature and laws of survival to these people.

Nevertheless, the writer has learned many interesting facts during this intimate relationship with the common Mallards.

Among these are: utter indifference of many females in placing nests close to paths, buildings or doorways; occasional fatal errors such as nesting in moored boats from which the young cannot escape; a tendency of females to combine families and adopt orphans; and instinctive diving of even newly-hatched ducklings when hard pressed on the water. These deep-diving ducklings could invariably be exhausted after a few forced dives and then could be picked up on the surface. Adult Mallards have been seen to dive shallowly only when bathing or sporting on the water. Incidentally, during feeding of diving ducks at the Embarcadero in past years some adult Pintails were seen diving after the grain.

Perhaps an even greater disappointment than the untimely death of the only two cygnets hatched during the past season, was the failure of the Canada Geese to hatch eggs laid on Duck Island. Following desertion of their first nest and four eggs soon after its discovery, visits to the island were discontinued for about two weeks. Then a second nest was found, but this, too, was soon deserted by the extremely

wary birds. This behavior was strange in view of their customary boldness and habit of feeding from the hand. Canada Geese did nest and rear young on the island many years ago.

The past introduction of clipped or pinioned birds of such species as Wood Duck, Gadwall, Shoveller, teal and native geese which do not regularly visit the lake has been criticized by some sentimental bird lovers. These birds were introduced to complete our collection of common California game waterfowl and to educate sportsmen as well others, thereby reducing mistaken identities and reckless shooting. Besides serving such ends and for general educational purposes these resident birds often attract some of their wild relatives to the comparative safety of our refuge. At this writing these introduced natives stand at: four Canada Geese, four Cackling Geese, five Lesser Snow Geese, one Ross' Goose, four White-fronted Geese, one male Wood Duck and one male Redhead Duck.

On October 1st Mr. Harry Adamson reported the presence of two Holboell Grebes, formerly amongst the rarest visitants to the Lake!

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Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc.

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Mail for all individuals listed above should be sent to GGAS office.

Send address changes to office promptly; Post office does not forward *THE GULL*. Monthly meetings: second Thursday, 7:30 p.m. Joint membership — local and national \$30 per year (individual); \$38 (family); includes *AUDUBON* Magazine and *THE GULL*; to join, make checks payable to National Audubon Society and send to GGAS office to avoid delay in receiving *THE GULL*. Membership renewals should be sent directly to the National Audubon office. Subscriptions to *THE GULL* separately \$10 per year; single issues \$1. High school and college student membership \$18 per year. Senior citizen individual \$21, senior citizen family \$23. Associate Membership in Golden Gate Audubon Society, \$10 per year.

The Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. was established January 25, 1917,
and became a chapter of National Audubon in 1948.

The *Gull* deadline is the first of the month for the following month, and July 15th for September issue.